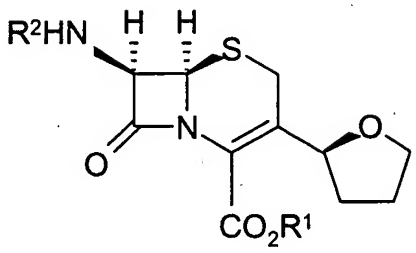
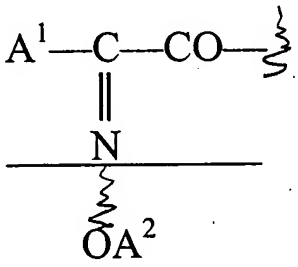
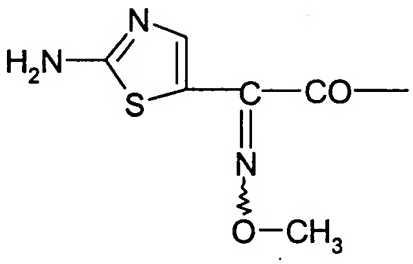
IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended): A process for preparing a 3-cyclic-ether substituted cephalosporin of the formula I:



or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein the group CO_2R^1 is a carboxylic acid or a carboxylate salt; and R^2 has the formula



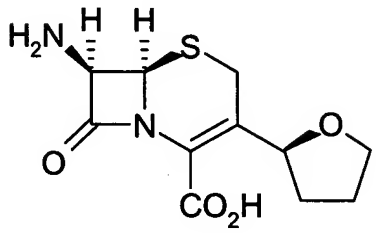


~~wherein~~

~~A^1 is selected from the group consisting of C_{6-10} aryl, C_{1-10} heteroaryl and C_{1-10} heterocyclic;~~

~~A^2 is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, C_{6-10} aryl, C_{1-6} alkyl(CO)(C_{1-6})alkyl-O-, HO(CO)(C_{1-6})alkyl, mono-(C_{6-10} aryl)(C_{1-6} alkyl), di-(C_{6-10}aryl)(C_{1-6} alkyl), and tri-(C_{6-10}aryl)(C_{1-6}alkyl);~~

comprising reacting a compound of formula II



II

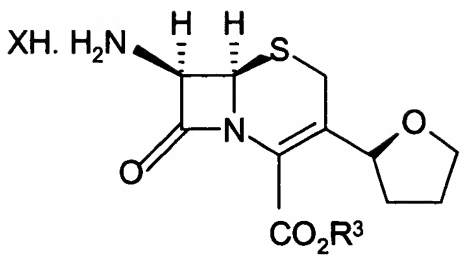
with a compound of the formula III

R^2L III

wherein R^2 is as defined above; and

L is ~~selected from the group consisting of hydroxy, halo, azido, mono(C_{1-6} alkyl)carbonate, (C_{1-6} alkyl)carboxylate, (C_{6-10} aryl)carboxylate, mono-(C_{6-10} aryl)(C_{1-6} alkyl)carboxylate, di(C_{6-10} aryl)(C_{1-6} alkyl)carboxylate,~~ di-(C_{1-6} alkyl)phosphorothioate~~, (C_{1-6}alkyl)sulfonyl, mono-(C_{1-6} alkyl)(C_{6-10}aryl)sulfonyl, di-(C_{1-6}alkyl)(C_{6-10} aryl)sulfonyl,)(C_{1-6} alkyl)-(CO)-S-, cyano-C_{1-6} alkoxy, C_{6-10} aryloxy, 3-benzthiazolyloxy, 8-quinolinyloxy and N-oxy-succinimidyl~~; in the presence of a solvent and a base.

2. (Original): The process according to claim 1 further comprising the step of preparing said compound of formula II by reacting a compound of formula IV:



wherein R^3 is para-nitrobenzyl or allyl; and X is halo;

with a suitable deprotecting agent; in the presence of a solvent.

3. – 6. (Cancelled).

7. (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 1, wherein L of said compound of the formula III is ~~selected from the group consisting of halo, methanesulfonyl,~~ diethylphosphorothioate ~~and 3-benzthiazolyoloxy~~.

8. (Cancelled).

9. (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 1, wherein said solvent is acetone ~~water, acetone, tetrahydrofuran, ethyl acetate, dimethylacetamide, dimethyformamide, acetonitrile, methylene chloride, 1,2-dichloroethane or mixtures thereof~~.

10. – 12. (Cancelled).

13. (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 1 wherein said base is ~~diisopropylethylamine or~~ sodium hydroxide.

14. – 15. (Cancelled).

16. (Currently Amended): A process according to claim ~~1~~ 2, wherein X is chloro.

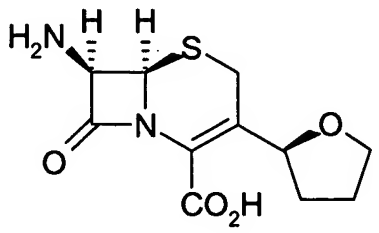
17. (Original): A process according to claim 2, wherein said R^3 is para-nitrobenzyl and said suitable deprotecting agent is sodium dithionite or a catalytic hydrogenating agent.

18. (Original): A process according to claim 2, wherein said R^3 is allyl and said suitable deprotecting agent is tetrakis triphenylphosphine palladium (0).

19. (Original): A process according to claim 17, wherein said solvent is acetone, water, tetrahydrofuran or mixtures thereof.

20. (Cancelled).

21. (Original): A compound of formula II:



II

22. (Original): The compound according to claim 21 wherein said compound of the formula II has an enantiomeric or diasteriomeric purity of 96% to 100%.

23. – 24. (Cancelled).

25. (New): A process according to Claim 2 wherein R^3 is para-nitrobenzyl.